

## Awards and Recognition

The County of San Diego is always looking for ways to improve the lives of residents and save taxpayer dollars by cutting costs, streamlining processes, incorporating the latest technology and expanding services. We do it to improve communities, but it's an added bonus when people take notice!

Here's a look at the recognition the County received during the past fiscal year for its leadership and excellence in operations.

### San Diego County Taxpayers Association

The San Diego County Taxpayers Association gives organizations that employ cost-efficient, smart governing decisions and innovative initiatives its Watchdog Awards. Of those winners, one is selected as the Grand Golden Watchdog Award. San Diego County has taken home that honor three years in a row now.

- In 2014, the County was named along with the City of San Diego, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps for working together to fight wildfires that had taken place only months before the ceremony. This cooperation among local, state and federal governments enabled firefighters, the military, emergency medical service providers and law enforcement to put the fires out quickly, minimize damage and help residents stay safe.

### National Association of Counties (NACo)

- The National Association of Counties recognizes innovative county government programs from across the nation each year. In 2014, the County of San Diego received 34 NACo awards—the highest number of awards in California and tied with another county for the most in the nation. Two programs, "AlertSanDiego" and "Community Transition Center" not only won awards, but were judged "Best in Category." See below for highlights and learn more about the awards on County News Center at <http://www.countynewscenter.com/news/san-diego-county-wins-34-achievement-awards-outstanding-programs>.
- AlertSanDiego (Office of Emergency Services): The County's Department of Emergency Services was honored for teaming up with the Target Corp. to give free tents donated by the company to the first 2,000 local residents who filled out Family Disaster Plans and registered with AlertSanDiego, the County's emergency

alert system for cellphones. Learn more at <http://www.countynewscenter.com/news/pledge-prepare-win-tent>.

- Community Transition Center (San Diego County Probation Department): Probation created a new County unit to help deal with "Public Safety Realignment"—the state's 2011 move to shift responsibility for thousands of prisoners from state prisons to counties—by making sure offenders undergo assessments, treatment and case-plan development before being released into the community.
- Operations Center Redevelopment for Consolidation and Effectiveness (Department of General Services): The redevelopment project used a creative public-private approach to create a government center that consolidated public and internal services in a walkable, energy-efficient and model campus. The multi-year phased project replaced outdated and inefficient one- and two-story buildings.
- San Diego Legends (San Diego County Library): The Legends project lets San Diego elders lead selected youth by example. The elders exemplify lifestyles that embrace the community's diversity, spiritual integrity, humanism and healthy living. Their lives and accomplishments are a testament to the nobility of hard work, respect for each other, commitment and a 'greater good.'
- Family Advocate Program (San Diego County Probation): Retired probation officers serve as Family Advocates to help reduce language and cultural barriers for Hispanic youth and others involved in the juvenile justice system. Probation employs two bilingual Family Advocates who work at the Juvenile Court and help steer youth and their parents through the complex legal process to help address court and probation requirements.
- First 5 San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (First 5 Commission): The initiative implements high-quality preschool programs that will help reduce the school readiness gap and improve children's school achievements in San Diego County. It is designed to ensure access to a high-quality preschool experience at no cost to families in 17 targeted high-need communities. The program promotes high standards for the delivery of early childhood education program services and learning environments based on state and nationally recognized best practices.

- **Workers Compensation e-Billing (Department of Human Resources):** An initiative that expanded the use of current vendor software to drastically reduce the volume of paper used for workers compensation medical bills. The project came at no cost to the County and has significantly improved staff efficiency in processing and paying medical bills.
- **E-Notification (Treasurer-Tax Collector):** A program designed specifically to remind taxpayers that their property tax payment will soon be due.
- **Property Tax Drive-Thru "Drop-n-Go" Payment Program (Treasurer-Tax Collector):** Property tax payments made by vehicle drive-through during peak periods.
- **Behavioral Health Court (Public Defender):** Behavioral Health Court is a collaborative program that helps formally diagnosed mentally ill offenders receive treatment, supervision and guidance on reaching life goals rather than jail time. It holds individuals accountable while helping them change for the better. The pioneering, innovative program helps offenders develop skills, receive appropriate mental health services and support in maintaining stable lives. The County of San Diego established the program to end the jail/prison revolving door many mentally ill offenders find themselves in. Defendants in this program are required to plead guilty to their crimes, but then receive treatment to reduce criminal activity.
- **Community Resource Directory (San Diego County Probation):** The San Diego County Probation Department has created a web-based Community Resource Directory to assist in linking probationers to appropriate community based intervention services based on their assessed needs via a customized case plan. The directory is a catalog of countywide services to which adults and juveniles can be referred in pursuit of their rehabilitation. The service provider reports back to probation officers on offender progress toward meeting program goals.
- **DNA CODIS Hit/CMS Integration Program (District Attorney):** The DNA CODIS Hit/CMS Integration Program is an innovative effort to enhance public safety by making DNA data automatically accessible for prosecutors. The real-time notifications allow the deputy district attorneys to connect a defendant to a new crime scene, even if it is someone they have prosecuted in the past.
- **San Diego Electronic Probable Cause Declaration (San Diego County Sheriff's Department):** The project streamlines the presentation of probable cause declarations from arresting officers, via the jail to the courts for judicial review to determine if an arrestee shall remain in County Jail pending arraignment. It was a joint initiative between the San Diego County Sheriff and the Superior Court. This information technology project was internally developed by the San Diego County Sheriff's Department's Data Services Division.
- **Tsunami Inundation Zone Mailing Project (Office of Emergency Services):** The County of San Diego spearheaded a project to create tsunami evacuation zone maps for each of its coastal cities, employing common terminology and symbology to ensure message consistency regardless of where members of the public may be along San Diego's coast. City-specific tsunami information and evacuation brochures were then mailed to every single resident and business within the worst-case scenario tsunami inundation zones as identified by the USGS.
- **Autoscore (Department of Human Resources):** Human Resources implemented autoscore, which looks at applicants' answers to a series of questions and screens out those who do not meet minimum qualifications. This enables staff to maintain timely hiring processes. The County receives over 90,000 online applications annually.
- **Lead Gradient Study of Ambient Air Surrounding the McClellan-Palomar Airport (Air Pollution Control District/Department of Public Works):** The Air Pollution Control District collaborated with the County Department of Public Works Airports Division and conducted a special "Lead Gradient Study" of the ambient air surrounding the McClellan-Palomar Airport in which levels of the heavy metal lead were measured from April to May 2013 and determined to be well below national limits. The study is of special significance because the EPA has been testing for lead in the air at more than 15 airports nationwide using the single-location sampling protocols and the APCD-Public Works study developed proper testing protocols for airport lead levels to ensure the public is appropriately informed of actual lead levels in the air they breathe.
- **Beach and Bay Mobile Website (Department of Environmental Health):** To meet growing demands in the use of mobile devices and provide timely public health protection information, the Department of Environmental Health launched its Beach Water Quality Monitoring Mobile Website. The site provides up-to-date beach water quality information to protect public health.
- **Chemical Suicide Risk Assessment for First Responders and the Public (Department of Environmental Health):** The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Division

conducted an extensive risk assessment to evaluate the hazards associated with responding to hydrogen sulfide suicides and the subsequent disposal of the hazardous wastes. This risk assessment has been presented and well-received by fire, law and medical professionals at local, regional, national and international conferences.

- **Love Your Heart (Health and Human Services Agency):** Love Your Heart is a Valentine's Day event during which the County of San Diego and its partners provide free blood pressure screenings to the public at select sites throughout the San Diego region. The goal of Love Your Heart is to activate San Diegans to "know their numbers" and take charge of their own heart health.
- **Protecting Our Hospitals From Contamination (Department of Environmental Health):** The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Division has trained over 400 hospital workers at 19 area hospitals to use Homeland Security equipment for decontamination. Hazardous materials incident victims that arrive at an area hospital potentially can close that hospital if not handled properly. The classes were conducted using adjunct instructors from multiple hospitals to standardize the hospitals and improve interoperability.
- **Safe Pain Medication Patient Handout (Behavioral Health):** The San Diego County Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force developed a colorful Safe Pain Medicine Prescribing handout printed in English and Spanish. The handout is given to all patients who are discharged from any emergency department in San Diego County.
- **Plan to Eliminate Homelessness for Families With Children (Housing and Community Development):** The County of San Diego Department of Housing and Community Development created a Special Local Preference for Homeless Families for the Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program (commonly referred to as "Section 8"). This preference is aimed at breaking the cycle of homelessness by providing a resource to prevent homeless individuals and families with children from returning to the streets or shelters once they have graduated from a federally funded transitional housing program.
- **Fall Risk Screenings for Older Adults in Community Settings (Aging and Independence Services):** Aging and Independence Services developed a screening to determine older adults' risk of falling.
- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (Aging and Independence Services):** Aging & Independence Services has been working with community partners and service providers to identify needed resources and support for grandparents raising grandchildren and other kinship caregivers in the community. Their combined efforts have resulted in annual "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" symposiums held at various regional locations and in the creation of "Handbook for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children," which is available in English and Spanish, and online as well.
- **County Government Jobs Makeover (Department of Human Resources):** Redesigned the external website to meet industry trends for design. The department included a promotional video to educate potential employees on available County opportunities, created a user-friendly experience and considered millennials in the design.
- **Electronic Performance Appraisal Notification (Department of Human Resources):** The Department of Human Resources improved the administration of performance appraisals in the County by implementing paperless delivery of notifications of performance appraisals due to departments. This saved the County significant annual printing costs and eliminated the labor costs of sorting and mailing the bi-weekly performance appraisal forms to departments.
- **Improved Access to Immunization Services (Health and Human Services Agency):** The South Region Public Health team successfully designed, implemented and evaluated a web-based immunization scheduling pilot that has improved access to important public health services. Evaluation data demonstrated a 96.7 percent high customer satisfaction rating and a significant reduction in wait time for services.
- **Job Applicant Self-Scheduling (Department of Human Resources):** Human Resources implemented the self-scheduling component of NEOGOV for written exams and interviews for applicants. This provided more convenience and flexibility for applicants and resulted in a reduction of staff time spent scheduling exams and interviews.
- **Legal Paperless System (Department of Child Support Services):** The County of San Diego's Department of Child Support Services' Legal Paperless System is an application that eliminated the need for paper files in court. The system reduced costs associated with generating paper files and increased the efficiency of the court hearing process.

- **Wireless Radio Alarm Transmission System (Department of General Services):** The Department of General Services developed a Wireless Radio Alarm Transmission System to ensure the continuous, fast, and reliable transmission of critical alarm signals from County facilities. The goal was to improve the performance of the existing alarm communication system, minimize/eliminate reliance on older analog phone lines and, where possible, reduce costs associated with the use of dedicated phone land lines.
- **Community Design Guideline Checklists and Streamlined Process (Planning and Development Services):** The program establishes a new ministerial process for the design review of multi-family, commercial and industrial projects within nine unincorporated County village areas with adopted Community Design Guidelines. The new ministerial process is implemented through standardized Design Review Checklists that streamlined the design review process. By complying with the Design Review Checklists, applicants avoid going through the lengthier discretionary process while continuing to ensure that Community Design Guidelines are appropriately applied and community character is maintained.
- **Live Well San Diego Initiative Focuses on Population Health, Safety and Quality of Life (Health and Human Services Agency):** Live Well San Diego is an initiative that promotes a vision of healthy, safe and thriving communities in which every resident across the county can "live well." It marks an evolution in how local government connects with and energizes the public to make positive choices for their own well-being. Live Well San Diego involves every department in County government, formally recognized partners across every sector, and five regional leadership teams that drive change at the community level. The backbone or infrastructure of this initiative includes a new website—[LiveWellSD.org](http://LiveWellSD.org)—and Top 10 Indicators to capture progress and focus efforts, as well as a process for enlisting and recognizing organizations as Live Well San Diego partners.
- **Online Building Permits for Roof-Mount Solar (Planning and Development Services):** The County of San Diego Department of Planning and Development Services developed an online application for roof top solar (photovoltaic) permits, and heating / air conditioning. Collectively, the department is processing over 25 percent of total permit volume online. This is a 400 percent increase from a year ago. It saves the customer and County a significant amount of time and money.

- **Fleet Mobile Maintenance (Department of General Services):** The Fleet Mobile Maintenance Program, offers an efficient and cost-effective method in providing routine preventive maintenance and repair of County vehicles and equipment operating in remote areas and where there is no fleet maintenance facility within close proximity. The benefits include a reduction in fuel cost, vehicle mileage and staff downtime associated with transporting vehicles to and from Fleet Maintenance Facilities.

### California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

San Diego County led the state in the CSAC annual awards program which honors the most innovative programs developed and implemented by California counties each year. CSAC recognized the County of San Diego with one Challenge Award and six Merit Awards in 2014.

- A Challenge Award went to the County's Accela Automation Implementation, a [new website](#) to streamline a wide variety of permitting operations and allows you to apply for and pay for certain permits online. People can submit plans, ask to schedule an inspection and conduct research on permits and property information on the new website.
- San Diego received Merit Awards for the following:
- **Embedding Eligibility Workers at Local Food Banks:** County Health and Human Services Agency had staff work at two food bank agencies to enhance access to nutrition assistance and health coverage. This partnership helps provide CalFresh (food stamps) and Medi-Cal application assistance.
- **Online Building Permits:** To reduce the time and cost of processing, as well as to improve customer service, the County's Planning and Development Services department developed an online application process for roof-mounted solar panels that has cut the processing time in half and eliminated the need for customers to spend time and money driving to County offices to get their building permits.
- **Paperless Performance Appraisals:** The County's Department of Human Resources improved the administration of performance appraisals by implementing paperless system. This electronic system has saved the County significant annual printing costs and eliminated the labor costs of sorting and mailing forms.
- **Plan to Eliminate Homelessness for Families:** The County established a Special Local Preference for Homeless Families applying for a Housing Choice



Voucher Rental Assistance Program—commonly referred to as Section 8. This preference is aimed at breaking the cycle of homelessness.

- San Diego Emergency Smartphone Application: This mobile application allows users to access critical information to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in San Diego County, including wildfires. The app is accessible on iPhone, iPad or Android phone and tablet.
- Sheriff's Analysis Driven Law Enforcement (SADLE): The Sheriff's Analysis Driven Law Enforcement team uses traditional investigative techniques along with computer-aided analysis to anticipate and respond to crime trends and hot spots. Overall, the approach has spread through the department and is credited with contributing to a 5 percent reduction in crime in the Sheriff's service areas.

## Additional Honors

- First 5 San Diego received a Bronze award in the Campaign-Not-for-Profit category of the Telly Awards. The Telly Awards honor outstanding local, regional, and cable TV commercials and programs, video and film productions, web commercials, videos and films. First 5 won for its Early Childhood Health and Education Campaign.
- The SD Emergency mobile app, available at [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/appcenter](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/appcenter), received the International Association of Emergency Managers 2013 Global Technology and Innovation Award for a local government.
- The Department of Purchasing and Contracting received an Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for the 13th year in a row from the National Procurement Institute. The department was among 179 agencies to win the award, which recognizes organizational excellence in procurement by measuring innovation, professionalism, e-procurement, productivity and leadership attributes.
- The Auditor and Controller earned the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) Award. The Government Finance Officers Association created the PAFR Awards Program to encourage and help state and local governments extract information from their comprehensive annual financial report to produce high quality popular annual financial reports. The County's PAFR is available at [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/auditor/cafr.html](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/auditor/cafr.html).
- Two County projects won the Center for Digital Government Best of California Awards. The Department of Child Support Services won for its Legal Paperless System in the "Best Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs" category. Learn more about the app at <http://countynewscenter.com/video?v=152554>. The Office of Emergency Services won for its SD Emergency mobile app (available at [www.sdcountry.ca.gov/appcenter](http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/appcenter)) in the "Best Mobile/Wireless Project" category.
- The San Diego County Investment Pool has once again received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The award, given by the Government Finance Officers Association, represents the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.
- The County was recognized with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Adopted Operational Plan Fiscal Years 2013-2014 & 2014-2015. This makes 12 consecutive years that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has recognized the County's commitment to the highest standards of governmental budgeting.
- Aging and Independence Services received two Achievement Awards from the National Association for Area Agencies on Aging for the More on the Menu (MOM) program and the Peer Educator Development and Leadership (PEDAL) program. MOM provides fresh produce to homebound older adults. Learn more at <http://countynewscenter.com/news/helping-seniors-put-more-menu>. PEDAL is an innovative program designed to support chronic disease self-management.
- Supervising Environmental Health Specialist, Nick Vent, was given a Fire and Life Safety Educator of the Year award from the Fire Prevention Officers Section of the San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association. The award is presented to a public educator, fire inspector or firefighter who is selflessly dedicated to public fire safety education. Vent was nominated because of the extensive hazardous materials response and terrorism awareness training he has provided over the years in his role with the Department of Environmental Health.
- The Edgemoor Skilled Nursing Facility in Santee was honored by the American Health Care Association/ National Center for Assisted Living with the 2013 Not-for-Profit Program of the Year award for the Sierra Stroll Program. The program helps patients who suffer from dementia, mental illness and aggression by allowing them to engage in social and physical activities to improve their physical and mental health.
- The Help and Outreach to Protect the Elderly (HOPE) Team received one of 10 prestigious national Community Partnership Awards from Mutual of America. The



## ■ ■ ■ Awards and Recognition

team is a partnership of health, social service and law enforcement agencies focused on helping the most vulnerable victims of elder abuse get back on their feet and avoid being re-victimized.

- County Communications Office videographer Suzanne Bartole was awarded an Emmy for her profile of mountain bikers who volunteer with the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team. The story is featured on County News Center and also ran on the CNC-TV's "County Chronicles" program. Bartole received the award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Pacific Southwest chapter. Watch <http://countynewscenter.com/video?v=152269>
- The San Diego County Investment Pool's comprehensive annual report received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.
- County News Center (<http://countynewscenter.com>) was named the best in the nation in local government multimedia. It was honored by the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors with the distinction of First Place for Overall Excellence.
- The County earned two Gold Beacon Spotlight awards from the California State Association of Counties for its efforts to reduce energy consumption and practice sustainability. The first award was for "Sustainability Best Practice Activities" after the County implemented 20 best practices in 10 different areas. The second was for "Energy Savings at Facilities" for reducing electricity and natural gas use in County buildings by more than 10 percent between 2006 and 2012. The Beacon Awards recognize cities and counties for reducing greenhouse emissions, saving energy and adopting policies and programs that promote sustainability.
- A project to update the County Transportation Impact Fee (TIF) won a Small Firm Merit Award in the 2014 Engineering Excellence Awards competition, sponsored by the American Counsel of Engineering Companies. A TIF is a fee that developers pay to mitigate the cumulative impacts of development.
- The California Park and Recreation Society presented the Creating Community Award of Excellence for Environmental Stewardship to the County for its efforts in involving the community in beautification projects, community cleanups and environmental education. Learn more at <http://countynewscenter.com/news/celebrating-milestone-regional-park>.
- The top passport official in the United States presented the Clerk of the Board with a Leadership Award for his exceptional commitment to the passport program in San Diego County, outstanding customer service and adherence to rigorous standards.
- The Department of General Services received the 2013 Public Facility Award of Excellence from the California Counties Facilities Services Association. DGS demonstrated exceptional dedication to facilities excellence through best practices, process innovation, staff development, department automation and energy program improvements.
- Two County of San Diego projects, the Rancho San Diego Sheriff Station and the Registrar of Voters building at the County Operations Center, received the Construction Management Association of America's Project Achievement Awards, which recognize excellence in construction management. The American Public Works Association also recognized both projects as representing the best in the public works profession.
- The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department selected the County as a Director's Recycling Award winner. The 2014 Waste Reduction and Recycling Awards recognized the County as an environmental leader through our combined efforts in waste reduction and recycling.
- County News Center won five first place honors at the Annual Conference for the California & Nevada Region of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers & Advisors. The awards were for Best Website, Best Use of Social Media, Magazine Program (for "County Chronicles"), Public Safety (for our Realignment video) and Documentary-Profile.
- Sheriff's Deputy William Dunford recently received the Charles "Bud" Meeks Valor Award for Deputy Sheriff of the Year, one of the highest honors a deputy sheriff can receive in the nation from the National Sheriff's Association. He is credited for helping save the lives of two fellow deputies. Read his story: <http://countynewscenter.com/news/deputy%E2%80%99s-aid-wounded-partners-earns-top-honor>
- The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County, a nonprofit agency promoting fire prevention and management, presented the County Fire Authority with an Agency Award for providing exceptional service within the community. The award recognized the Fire Authority for funding work that better prepared more than 200 properties in the East County for the 2014 fire season.